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10,533,282
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By this Amendment, claims 19, 20, 27 and 29 are canceled and claims 18, 21, 24, 28, 30 and 31 are amended. Claims 22, 23, 25, 26 and 32-34 remain as previously presented. As a result, claims 18, 21-26, 28 and 30-34 are pending in the application. Claim 18 is amended to include the patentable limitations of allowable claim 20 and intervening claim 19. Claims 21 and 24 are amended for better clarity. Allowable claim 28 is rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of base claim 18 and intervening claim 27. Allowable claim 30 is rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of base claim 18 and intervening claim 29. Claim 31 is amended to provide proper antecedent basis.

Pursuant to the Office Action, claims 18-19, 21-23, 29 and 31-34 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by United States Patent 6,453,090 (Conde et al.). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection with respect to the claims as amended herein. Independent claim 18 is amended to include the patentable limitations of allowable dependent claim 20 and intervening claim 19. Therefore, claim 18 is patentable. Claim 19 is canceled. Claims 21-23 depend directly from patentable base claim 18, and thus, are likewise allowable for at least the same reasons. Claim 29 is canceled. Allowable claim 30 is rewritten in independent form, and therefore is also patentable. Claim 31 depends directly from patentable base claim 30, and thus, is likewise allowable for at least the same reasons. Claims 32-34 depend directly from patentable base claim 18, and thus, are likewise allowable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of claims 18-19, 21-23, 29 and 31-34 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e).

Pursuant to the Office Action, claims 24-27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable (obvious) over Conde et al. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection with respect to the claims as amended herein. Independent claim 18 is amended to include the patentable limitations of allowable dependent claim 20 and intervening claim 19. Therefore, claim 18 is patentable. Claims 24-26 depend directly from patentable base claim 18, and thus,

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are likewise allowable for at least the same reasons. Claim 27 is canceled. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of claims 24-27 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

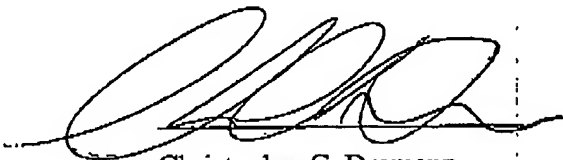
Pursuant to the Office Action, claims 20, 28 and 30 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 18 is amended to include the limitations of allowable claim 20 and intervening claim 19. Claim 28 is rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of *original* base claim 18 and intervening claim 27. Claim 30 is rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of *original* base claim 18 and intervening claim 29. Accordingly, Applicant submits that pending claims 18, 21-26, 28 and 30-34 are patentable and the application is now in condition for immediate allowance.

BEST AVAILABLE COPY**CONCLUSION**

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection(s) and objection(s) to the claims and to reconsider the application. This Amendment is timely filed, fully responsive to the Office Action and places the application in condition for immediate allowance. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to issue a Notice of Allowability for the pending claims. Applicant encourages the Examiner to contact the undersigned directly to further the prosecution of any remaining issues, and thereby expedite allowance of the application.

This Amendment results in no more independent (3) or total (13) claims than paid for previously. Accordingly, no fee for excess claims is believed to be due. However, the Examiner is hereby authorized to charge any fee due in connection with the filing of this response, including any excess claims fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-2167. If an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 not already accounted for is required, such an extension is requested and the fee should likewise be charged to Deposit Account No. 19-2167. Any overpayment should be credited to Deposit Account No. 19-2167.

Respectfully submitted,



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